THE FIFTH DAY.

16th February 1917.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on Friday, the 16th February 1917.

56. Agricultural needs of the Vaikom taluk.

Mr. P. R. Narayana Pillai (Member, Vaikom taluk) represented that wet cultivation in the taluk was growing more and more difficult and that the chief causes were the defects in the method of cultivation and the want of facilities for proper cultivation. An important factor in cultivation was cattle. None possessed good cattle. The difficulty of feeding the few cattle in the taluk had become insurmountable. The Government had set apart two bits of land as grazing grounds, one in the Vadayar *pakuthi* and the other in the Thalayazham *pakuthi*. The ground in Vadayar was hilly and full of bushes and shrubs and the grass growing in the area set apart at Thalayazham was fit only for weaving mats and not for feeding cattle. The ground was also so marshy that cattle could not graze there without fear of getting steeped in the marsh. The object of the Government was not gained by setting apart the above bits as grazing grounds.

The Members for the taluk had been requesting for a manure depot in the taluk. The reply given at the last session of the Assembly was that the depot at Shertallai should serve Vaikom also. To avail themselves of this depot, they had to cross the dangerous Vembanad Lake. Further, the farmers were not well-to-do and could not afford to defray the necessary expenditure and procure manure from Shertallai. The cultivators did not know the scientific methods of cultivation. At present, the farmers suffered much from failure of crops. Any help that the Department of Agriculture could afford would be of great value. Recently, when the paddy fields were infested with pests, the Director of Agriculture deputed the Entomology Assistant to help the ryots in eradicating the same. The suggestions made by that officer proved efficacious. The Member suggested that, for improving cultivation, certain lands now left uncared for in the several *pakuthis* might be taken up by the Agricultural Department and cultivated scientifically to serve as a model to the people.

The several canals in the taluk that were formerly used for traffic were now in a neglected condition. Many of them had been silted up and the adjacent registry-holders got them registered in their names. The result was that the water from such rivers as the Muvattupuzha river collected itself in fields instead of flowing into the lake and thus did havoc to cultivation. There were a number of encroachments on the Moozhikal *thodu* which connected the Ithipuzha river and Panjipalam. A former Tahsildar of the taluk removed most of them and made the canal fit for traffic. His successors in office, however, ordered many of those encroachments to be registered. Several applications for registry were pending in the taluk office. The Kaniyan *thodu* was another important canal. The encroachments on it were being removed. The Member learnt that the Government had directed the Chief Engineer to submit an estimate for improving that canal. But nothing further was known.

In conclusion, the Member summarised his suggestions for improving agriculture in the taluk as follows :—

(1) The reservation of one or more good grazing grounds.

(2) The opening of a manure depot somewhere on the banks of the Puthenthode.

(3) The appointment of a qualified Agricultural Inspector for the taluk.

(4) The improvement of the existing canals named below and the issue of orders prohibiting the registry of any portion of those canals:—

(*a*) Kaniyanthodu.

(*b*) Moozhikalthodu.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

(*c*) Peruchilavuthodu.

(*d*) Vallayilthodu.

(*e*) The canal passing through Vettikkattumukku.

(*f*) Poochakalthodu.

(*g*) Perumprakalthodu.

Mr. K. G. Krishna Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Vaikom) also discussed the same points as those of the previous speaker and made the following suggestions :—

(1) New grazing grounds should be set apart as the areas already selected were useless for the purpose.

(2) A manure depot should be opened in the taluk.

(3) Old canals, now lying neglected, should be restored.

(4) The Heads of Departments should be asked to send advance copies of their tour programmes before they reached the taluk on circuit. They should travel in the interior parts of the taluk and get first-hand information from the ryots as to their grievances and note such information in their diaries. The existing orders of the Government on the above points should be renewed.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

57. State aid for the development of Punja cultivation.

Mr. A. Madhavan Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Changanacherry) said that the cultivation of paddy which was the mainstay of the people was getting more and more unprofitable and that the Department of Agriculture was not helping the people of his taluk. As a rule, large land-owners did not cultivate their lands. The farmers were generally poor. The Agricultural Loans Regulation did not render much help to the poor and needy agriculturists. For purposes of cultivation they borrowed money from professional money-lenders at high rates of interest sometimes going up to 20 per cent. The Regulation made it obligatory that immovable property should be tendered as security for the repayment of the loan. It was not possible for all agriculturists to tender immovable property as security. Personal security must be deemed sufficient. The Member suggested that investments in *chitties*, debenture bonds, deposits in Co-operative Societies and Savings Banks and also personal security bonds of persons who owned landed property should be accepted as security for the repayment of the loans under the Regulation. The working of the Regulation was at present entrusted to the Revenue Department which was saddled with multifarious duties ; he suggested that the Agricultural Department might be authorised to grant loans under the Regulation, the funds for the same being transferred to that department.

The Member next urged the desirability of selling manures and agricultural implements to the ryots on credit and of realising the price thereof in easy instalments. The yield from the *punja* lands was growing less and less, although the Agricultural Department was of opinion that, by the proper application of manure, etc., the yield would go up. He said that wet lands of less yielding capacity should be taken on lease by the department and cultivated so as to serve as a model to the ryots.

According to section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072, whenever any proprietor of any land failed to contribute the cost or labour for works to be done jointly such as the putting up of ring bunds or draining of water in *punja* lands, the work might be arranged to be executed under the orders of the Division Peishkar and the cost thereof recovered from such defaulter as arrears of land revenue. The Member suggested that the power to get such ring bunds put up and to recover the cost from the defaulters should be vested in the Agricultural Department.

Difficulty was being experienced for want of materials for putting up ring bunds. The Department of Agriculture should be asked to grow suitable trees

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly